

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A fill-through-the-top reclosable package convertible between a pre-filled condition and a post-filled condition, comprising:
  - 5 first and second opposing body panels joined to each other along a pair of sides and a bottom bridging the pair of sides; and
  - a reclosable fastener extending along a package top disposed opposite the bottom, the fastener including first and second opposing tracks, the first track including a male profile, the second track including a female profile
  - 10 adapted to releasably interlock with the male profile, the first and second tracks being joined to each other along an area of weakness;
  - wherein in the pre-filled condition, the first track is connected to the first panel but the second track is only partially connected to the second panel so as to creating a fill opening between the second track and the second panel;
  - 15 wherein in the post-filled condition, the second track is connected to the second panel to seal the fill opening, the package being converted to the post-filled condition after the package has been filled with a product via the fill opening.
- 20 2. The package of claim 1, wherein the bottom includes a gusset that expands in response to filling the package with the product.
3. The package of claim 1, further including a slider mounted to the fastener for opening and closing the fastener in response to movement therealong.
- 25 4. The package of claim 3, wherein the fastener is free of pull flanges extending upwardly from the male and female profiles.
5. The package of claim 1, wherein the area of weakness is selected from the group consisting of a scored line, a perforated line, a thinned die line, and a tear strip.

6. The package of claim 1, wherein the first track includes a plurality of first sealant ribs on an outer surface of the first track to facilitate connecting the first track to the first panel, and the second track includes a plurality of second sealant ribs on an outer surface of the second track to facilitate connecting the second track to the second panel.

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7. The package of claim 1, wherein in the pre-filled condition, the second track is connected to the second panel only along the sides.

8. The package of claim 1, wherein the first and second tracks include respective first and second fins extending downward from the respective male and female profiles, the first and second fins being joined to each other along the area of weakness to effectively create a single fin comprised of the first and second fins.

9. A method of making a reclosable package, comprising:  
15 supplying a web of plastic material;  
supplying a reclosable fastener including first and second opposing tracks, the first track including a male profile, the second track including a female profile adapted to releasably interlock with the male profile, the first and second tracks being joined to each other along an area of weakness;  
20 folding the web to provide first and second opposing panels;  
attaching the first track to the first panel;  
sealing the web such that the first and second panels are joined to each other along a pair of sides and a bottom bridging the pair of sides;  
filling the package with a product via a fill opening between the second track and  
25 the second panel; and  
attaching the second track to the second panel to seal the fill opening.

30 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the bottom includes a gusset that expands in response to filling the package with the product.

11. The method of claim 9, further including the steps of supplying a slider for opening and closing the fastener in response to movement therealong and mounting the slider to the fastener.

5 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the fastener is free of pull flanges extending upwardly from the male and female profiles.

10 13. The method of claim 9, wherein the area of weakness is selected from the group consisting of a scored line, a perforated line, a thinned die line, and a tear strip.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of attaching the first track to the first panel occurs after the step of folding the web and prior to the step of sealing the web.

15 15. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of folding the web provides a fold line along the bottom, and wherein the step of sealing the web provides seals along the sides.

16. The method of claim 9, further including the step of separating the package from a remainder of the web.

20 17. The method of claim 11, further including the steps of supplying a pair of end terminations for stopping movement of the slider near the respective sides of the package and mounting the end terminations to the fastener near the respective sides of the package.

25 18. The method of claim 9, wherein the first track includes a plurality of first sealant ribs on an outer surface of the first track to facilitate the step of attaching the first track to the first panel, and wherein the second track includes a plurality of second sealant ribs on an outer surface of the second track to facilitate the step of attaching the second track to the second panel.

30 19. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of supplying a reclosable fastener includes providing the first and second tracks with respective first and second fins extending downward from the respective male and female profiles, the first and second fins being

joined to each other along the area of weakness to effectively create a single fin comprised of the first and second fins.

20. A method of making a reclosable package, comprising:

5        supplying a web of plastic material in a longitudinal direction;

      supplying a reclosable fastener including first and second opposing tracks, the first track including a male profile, the second track including a female profile  
[adapted to] releasably interlock with the male profile;

10      folding the web along one or more longitudinal folds to provide first and second opposing panels, the longitudinal folds creating a bottom of the package;

      attaching the first track to the first panel;

      sealing the web along a pair of sides, the bottom bridging the pair of sides;

      filling the package with a product via a fill opening between the second track and the second panel; and

15      attaching the second track to the second panel to seal the fill opening.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the bottom includes a gusset that expands in response to filling the package with the product.

20     22. The method of claim 20, further including the steps of supplying a slider for opening and closing the fastener in response to movement therealong and mounting the slider to the fastener.

25     23. The method of claim 22, wherein the fastener is free of pull flanges extending upwardly from the male and female profiles.

24. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of attaching the first track to the first panel occurs after the step of folding the web and prior to the step of sealing the web.

30     25. The method of claim 20, further including the step of separating the package from a remainder of the web.

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26. The method of claim 22, further including the steps of supplying a pair of end terminations for stopping movement of the slider near the respective sides of the package and mounting the end terminations to the fastener near the respective sides of the package.

5 27. The method of claim 20, wherein the first track includes a plurality of first sealant ribs on an outer surface of the first track to facilitate the step of attaching the first track to the first panel, and wherein the second track includes a plurality of second sealant ribs on an outer surface of the second track to facilitate the step of attaching the second track to the second panel.

10 28. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of supplying a reclosable fastener includes providing the first and second tracks with respective first and second fins extending downward from the respective male and female profiles, the first and second fins being joined to each other along an area of weakness to effectively create a single fin comprised of the first and second fins

15 29. An apparatus for making a reclosable package from a web of plastic material and a reclosable fastener, the reclosable fastener including first and second opposing tracks, the first track including a male profile, the second track including a female profile adapted to interlock with the male profile, the first and second tracks being joined to each other along an area of weakness, the apparatus comprising:

20 means for folding the web to provide first and second opposing panels;

means for attaching the first track to the first panel;

means for sealing the web such that the first and second panels are joined to each 25 other along a pair of sides and a bottom bridging the pair of sides;

means for filling the package with a product via a fill opening between the second track and the second panel; and

means for attaching the second track to the second panel to seal the fill opening.

30 30. The apparatus of claim 29, further including means for mounting a slider to the fastener, the slider being adapted to open and close the fastener in response to movement therealong.

31. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the means for attaching the first track to the first panel is downstream relative to the means for folding the web and upstream relative to the means for sealing the web.

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32. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the means for folding the web provides a fold line along the bottom, and wherein the means for sealing the web provides seals along the sides.

10 33. The apparatus of claim 29, further including means for separating the package from a remainder of the web.

15 34. The apparatus of claim 30, further including means for mounting a pair of end terminations to the fastener near the respective sides of the package, the end terminations being adapted to stop movement of the slider near the respective sides of the package.

20 35. An apparatus for making a reclosable package from a web of plastic material and a reclosable fastener, the reclosable fastener including first and second opposing tracks, the first track including a male profile, the second track including a female profile *(adapted to)* interlock with the male profile, the apparatus comprising:

means for folding the web along one or more folds to provide first and second opposing panels, the folds creating a bottom of the package;

means for attaching the first track to the first panel;

means for sealing the web along a pair of sides, the bottom bridging the pair of sides;

25 means for filling the package with a product via a fill opening between the second track and the second panel; and

means for attaching the second track to the second panel to seal the fill opening.

30 36. The apparatus of claim 35, further including means for mounting a slider to the fastener, the slider being adapted to open and close the fastener in response to movement therealong.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the means for attaching the first track to the first panel is downstream relative to the means for folding the web and upstream relative to the means for sealing the web.

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38. The apparatus of claim 35, further including means for separating the package from a remainder of the web.

39. The apparatus of claim 36, further including means for mounting a pair of end terminations to the fastener near the respective sides of the package, the end terminations being adapted to stop movement of the slider near the respective sides of the package.

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